



Department of Justice

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BREVARD COUNTY SEX OFFENDER FOUND GUILTY OF DOWNLOADING AND POSSESSING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Orlando, FL - U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announces that a federal jury Thursday found Robert A. Howard, Jr. (41, Brevard County) guilty of receiving child pornography and possession of child pornography. Howard faces a minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 40 years in federal prison. His sentencing hearing will be scheduled approximately 75 days from today.

Howard was indicted on September 29, 2010, for receipt of child pornography and possession of child pornography. Howard had confessed to the crime when investigators showed up at his Brevard County home to interview him. Court records show that Howard had sexually abused one of his adopted daughters.

According to testimony and evidence presented at trial, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Task Force Agent and detective with the Brevard County Sheriff's Office, was notified in September 2005 about certain allegations regarding the defendant possessing child pornography. His investigation led him to the defendant's home where he was able to search the defendant's computer for child pornography. After finding an image of child pornography on the computer, the agent obtained a recorded statement from the defendant. In that statement, the defendant admitted to downloading child pornography.

Later, the defendant gave a videotaped confession.

This case was investigated by the Crimes Against Children Task Force of the Brevard County Sheriff's Office and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, Cocoa Beach Resident Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Tanya Davis Wilson.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

The investigation that led to this case was part of Operation Predator, a nationwide ICE initiative to identify, investigate and arrest those who prey on children, including human traffickers, international sex tourists, Internet pornographers, and foreign-national predators whose crimes make them deportable. Launched in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 12,800 individuals through Operation Predator. ICE encourages the public to report suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-347-2423. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators. Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.